



### 7th Congressional District News Funding Firefighters for A Safer New Jersey

Representative Mike Ferguson

Paul Malool, a firefighter for the Scotch Plains Fire Department, knows first-hand the benefits of the Homeland Security Department's grant program for the nation's first responders. After the program began following the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, his fire department has received \$117,360 from Washington.

Scotch Plains purchased new radios to communicate with EMS and police officers. "The grant system is working," Mr. Malool said. "The money that we have received is dynamite."

Several Union County first responders also have received security grants, including \$133,920 for the Westfield Fire Department; \$140,850 for the Summit Fire Department; \$70,758 for New Providence Volunteer Fire Department, and \$78,605 for the Fanwood Fire Department.

Throughout the Seventh District that I represent - which includes portions of Hunterdon, Middlesex, Somerset and Union Counties - more than \$2 million in security grants have been distributed to first responders.

We think about firefighters when we see a house fire or a traffic accident. But since the 9/11 attacks, they have added important homeland security responsibilities, too.

For example, Mr. Malool and other local firefighters say they have received training in responding to emergencies involving biological and other weapons of mass destruction.

To meet these new challenges, fire

departments need additional funding both for training and new equipment. Often local governments, already pressed with tight budgets, cannot meet this need.

That's why the Homeland Security Department's Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program is important. Congress has approved more than \$600 million in first-responder funding for this year.

The application period for seeking these grants is from March 7 to April 8. Since 2001, I have annually contacted each fire chief and mayor to urge them to apply for the grants and offer the services of my office in completing the application.

Overall, New Jersey has benefited from security funding; our state ranks as the nation's eighth largest recipient of federal security funds. That's appropriate given New Jersey's proximity to New York City and our extensive network of transportation and critical infrastructure, such as interstate tunnels, bridges and ports, and nuclear and chemical plants.

Although New Jersey has received more than \$240 million in security funding since 2001, more needs to be done to ensure we fortify our vulnerabilities and protect our communities from the legitimate threats we face.

One of the challenges New Jersey faces in securing more funding is the formula that distributes grants. For example, under current law each state is given at least some money, regardless of whether certain states face a legitimate threat of an attack.

That means security funding isn't solely based, as the 9/11 Commission unanimously recommended, on population density, critical infrastructure and realistic threat. And that means states like New Jersey receive fewer security dollars than they need or deserve.

I have worked to try to change that funding formula, including pressing Congressional leaders and Homeland Security Department officials. Obviously, lawmakers from low-risk states that currently receive security funding oppose any formula change.

This year, I am co-sponsoring legislation introduced by my New Jersey colleague, Congressman Rodney Frelinghuysen, which would change the formula to ensure security funds are distributed according to a state's risks, vulnerabilities and threats, as well as its capability to respond to terrorism.

Homeland security funding is critically important to New Jersey, as dozens of firefighters like Mr. Malool can attest. We need more funding so our first responders can meet their new responsibilities.



Photo Courtesy of NJ Biz  
A DILIGENT GROUP...Members of Association for Corporate Growth (ACG) meet on February 9 at the Woodbridge Hilton with 250 attendees discussing mergers and acquisitions focused on the fundamentals of Due Diligence. Pictured above, from left to right, are: ACG President Mark Kuehn of Westfield, Westfield resident Glenn Tucker of Greenberg Dauber Epstein & Tucker, Ken Kovalcik of ACG, NJ State Treasurer John McCormac, Westfield resident Terrence Bentley, Westfield resident George Hansen, Steven Pinsky of J.H. Cohn and Thomas Hays of NachmanHays. For more information, see www.duediligencesymposium.com.

### Forrester Calls for End Of School Const. Corp.

WEST WINDSOR - Citing a report about massive waste, mismanagement and possible corruption at the School Construction Corporation (SCC), Republican gubernatorial candidate Doug Forrester this week called for an immediate investigation by U.S. Attorney Chris Christie, for the dissolution of the SCC and the resignation of SCC Chairman Jack Kocis.

"Attorney General Peter Harvey sits on the SCC board and therefore, cannot objectively investigate waste, fraud and abuse at the SCC," said a spokesman for the Forrester campaign.

"The SCC has blown through nearly \$8.6 billion and hasn't even come

close to finishing the schools for our children," said Mr. Forrester. "This is why New Jersey needs an independently elected auditor general to root out the fraud and abuse that is wasting hundreds of millions of New Jersey families' hard-earned dollars every year."

"One has to seriously wonder why the SCC pays as much as 84 percent more than what local districts pay for school construction," asked Mr. Forrester. "The SCC was supposed to provide students with school buildings conducive to learning, but instead it is lining the pockets of politically connected vendors and government bureaucrats."



### 21st District News Improving Civility Approved as Course at University

Assemblyman Jon Bramnick, Westfield

Assemblyman Jon Bramnick's (R-21) concept of improving civility has been approved as a course at Kean University.

President of Kean University Dawood Farahi announced the schedule of a new course for high school freshman and sophomores throughout New Jersey. The course involves teaching manners and etiquette and was a product of Assemblyman Bramnick's campaign to increase civility.

The Always Building Character program will be held on Fridays, February 18, March 4, and March 11.

According to the course description, the program is "designed to reinforce the idea that a college educa-

tion is within the grasp of any high school student that would like to pursue one."

The goal of the half-day program is to inspire students "to look at college as a viable option." The program will conclude with a lunch workshop that will educate the students as to civil discourse, self-presentation and proper etiquette while dining. Each student that completes the program will receive a certificate from the university.

Assemblyman Bramnick will lead-up a "Dining Etiquette Lunch" at 11:45 a.m. He has addressed more than 100,000 people across the nation at schools, corporations, and athletic teams.

### Women Voters to Sponsor Great Decisions 2005 Series

WESTFIELD - The Westfield Area League of Women Voters will once again sponsor the Great Decisions discussion series of the Foreign Policy Association during the Westfield Adult School spring semester.

The topics will include "U.S. Intelligence Reform"; "Putin's Second Term, a Scorecard for Russia"; "Outsourcing Jobs: U.S. Dilemma"; "China: Economic Giant Emerges"; "Sudan and the War in Darfur"; "The U.S. and Global Poverty"; "U.S. Challenges in Iraq and in the Muslim World"; and "Freshwater and Foreign Policy: New Challenges."

Past speakers have included United States Foreign Service officers, former

United States ambassadors and experts from universities in the metropolitan area including Rutgers, Monmouth and Columbia Universities.

The series will run on the following dates at Westfield High School: March 7, 14, 21 and 28, April 11, 18 and 25, and May 2, from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m.

For further information, please visit [www.fpa.org](http://www.fpa.org) or [www.westfieldnj.com/adultschool](http://www.westfieldnj.com/adultschool); email [adultschool@westfieldnj.com](mailto:adultschool@westfieldnj.com) or call (908) 232-4050.

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### Polar Bear Plunge Set for February 27

AREA - The New Jersey Law Enforcement Torch Run's (LETR) 12th Annual Polar Bear Plunge to benefit Special Olympics New Jersey will take place at Jenkinson's Boardwalk, Pt. Pleasant Beach at noon on Sunday, February 27.

This year, 3,000 plungers are expected to take the dip into the icy waters while thousands cheer them on in one of the largest grossing plunges in the country. There are 247 plungers from Union County.

The New Jersey Law Enforcement Torch Run has long been a supporter of Special Olympics New Jersey with a host of annual events that kicks off with the Polar Bear Plunge.

Olympics New Jersey provides year-round sports training and Olympic-type competition in 23 sports for 14,000 children and adults with intellectual disabilities or other closely related developmental disabilities.

For more information on the 12th Annual Polar Bear Plunge, please call (609) 896-8000 or visit the web site [www.njpolarplunge.sonj.org](http://www.njpolarplunge.sonj.org).

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### DID YOU KNOW?

The Spanish classify their wines by the duration of maturation of the wine. The youngest wines are given the title of Joven (young). Crianza are wines aged for one year in a barrel and then an additional year in a bottle. Reserva is aged for a year in the barrel and then an additional 2 in the bottle. Lastly Gran Reserva is aged for two years in a barrel and an additional three in a bottle.

## WINES OF SPAIN



### Bodega Juan Gil Wrongo Dongo

Jumilla 2003

\$6.99 On Sale

"This chewy red offers juicy cherry and plum flavors against a backdrop of game and chocolate notes. The tannins are ripe and well-integrated, the finish long and peppery." 86 pts. Wine Spectator



### Marques de Irun Rueda

Superior 2003

\$7.99 On Sale

A crisp, refreshing, drink now dry white wine. Bright yellow in color, light-bodied, fresh and fruity, with a balanced acidity. 86 pts. Wine Spectator



### Bodegas Aldial Naia Rueda

2003

\$7.99 On Sale

"Perhaps the finest blend of Verdejo and Viura I have ever tasted. This light-bodied, dry white is loaded with fruit. It offers an intense bouquet of orange marmalade, honeyed grapefruit, and other citrus in a fruit-driven, refreshing style with good underlying acidity. A great value" 88 pts. Robert Parker



### Sierra Cantabria Crianza

1999

\$10.99 On Sale

Elegant and medium-bodied, with rich fruit as well as a luscious texture, it should drink well for 2-3 years. This is an excellent value. This winery consistently makes the pages of this publication's best buy section. 89 pts. Robert Parker



### Lustau Papirusa

\$9.99 On Sale

"Light straw color is accompanied by a spicy, nutty nose, elegant dry flavors, delicious purity and a smoky intensity. Drink over the next year" 92 pts. Robert Parker

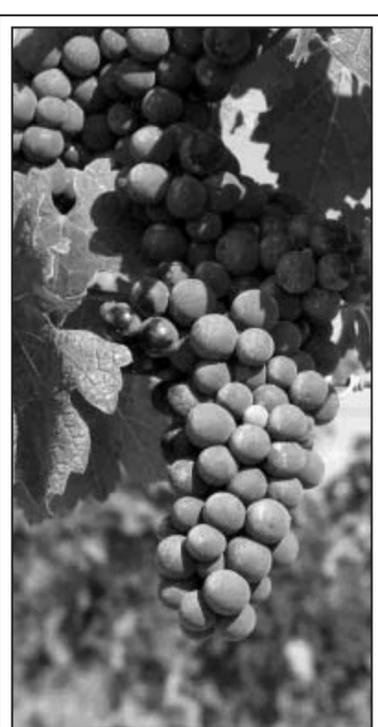


### Altos de Luzon

2002

\$14.99 On Sale

"This international-style red shows impressive focus, with ripe, fresh cherry fruit, sweet oak and a firm, clean structure. Cherry and berry flavors linger gracefully on the finish. Monastrell, Cabernet Sauvignon and Tempranillo. Drink now through 2010." 89 pts. Wine Spectator



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